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Your essential daily news | WEEKEND, JANUARY 27-29, 2017

High -3°C/Low -9°C Chance of flurries

SUGAR SHOWDOWN
metroSCIENCE

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau plays Simon Says with students at Robert H. Smith School on Thursday. Trudeau spent the day in Winnipeg as part of his cross-country tour.
JOHN WOODS/ THE CANADIAN PRESS

Simon says...

Justin Trudeau makes a stop in Winnipeg during national town hall tour metroNEWS

Police station claims 'disturbing'

CONSTRUCTION

Mayor calls for public inquiry into fraud allegations in headquarters deal

Stephanie Taylor
Metro | Winnipeg

"Deeply disturbed, distressed and angered."

Mayor Brian Bowman didn't mince words on Thursday over explosive new allegations of fraud and a $200,000 payoff to the city's former top bureaucrat in the police headquarters deal.

At a city hall press conference, Bowman announced he plans to formally ask the province for a public inquiry into the matter.

Earlier that day, CBC News reported the RCMP alleged former CAO Phil Sheegl was paid $200,000 by Caspian Construction for helping them land the job of transforming a Canada Post warehouse on Smith Street into the new home of the city's police service.

CBC also reported that RCMP allege Sheegl shared half that money with former mayor Sam Katz. Bowman called these new allegations "the most seriously damaging to public trust at city hall to date."

"It's hard to imagine a more damaging allegation that could be made that compromise the public trust in this city hall," he said.

He plans to table a motion at an executive policy committee in February, asking the province to call for an inquiry. The province wouldn't comment on Bowman's request.

"While our government understands the concerns raised by the Mayor of Winnipeg, it would be premature for the Attorney General of Manitoba to comment on an issue that remains under active criminal investigation. This is vital to ensure the integrity of the process," Heather Stefanson, Minister of Justice and Attorney General, said in an email statement to Metro.

Bowman said the scope of the requested inquiry will have to be decided by the city's public administration and legal services.

"I take these allegations very, very seriously. We have a job to (do). It's not unreasonable for Winnipeggers to expect that we're going to be doing everything in our power."

Coun. John Orlikow, chairman of the city's property, planning and development committee, echoed Bowman's characterization when he called the allegations "disturbing."

"There's no other better word for it," he told reporters. "Disturbing not only for democracy at whole, but for the taxpayers that invest with us. It puts a bad light onto what we try to do here in the public service to support people."

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5 THINGS TO DO IN WINNIPEG THIS WEEKEND

Take your pick of rom-coms and foam-bullet attacks.

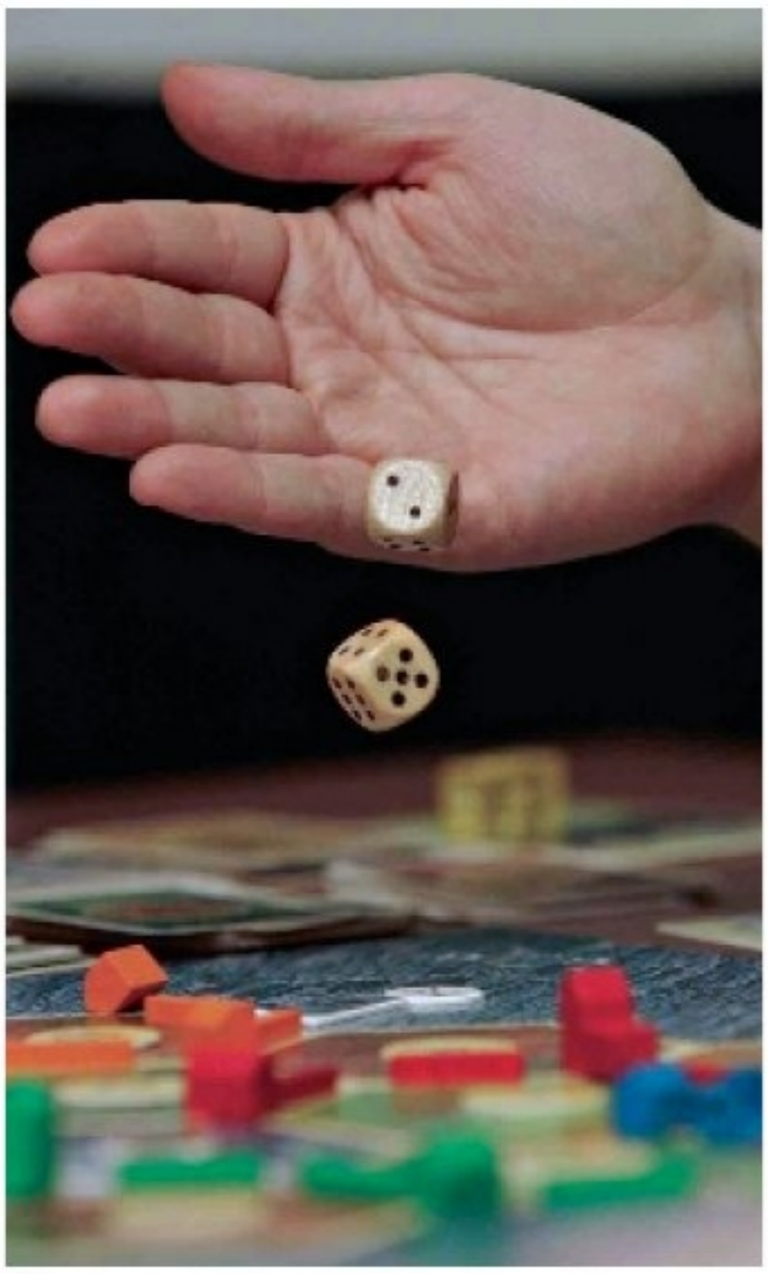
MICHELLE BAILEY FOR METRO

1 Don't shoot your eye out!

Get ready to release your inner sniper this Saturday, Jan. 29 when Dartpocalypse takes over Sturgeon Creek Community Centre at 210 Rita Street. For $10 per player, you can be part of this NERF gun battle at two different times (12 p.m. to 1 p.m. or 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.). All you have to bring is your skill as they supply the blasters, foam-dart ammo and safety glasses. Check out www.dartpocalypse.com for more details..

2 Music festival celebrates 26 years

The Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra kicks off a week filled with music and art as part of its Winnipeg New Music Festival. This year, the WSO is celebrating Canada 150 with a diverse and colourful mosaic of Canadian ethnic composers. Opening night concert is at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 28 at the Centennial Concert Hall and is followed by The HUB after-party. Visit wso.ca for information.



3 Gaming, fandom and fun

Keycon, Manitoba's premier science fiction and literacy convention, is hosting a minicon on Saturday, Jan. 29. Gaming, panels, an art show and more take place from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (free admission). A dinner and a dance ($20 to attend both) follows starting at 6 p.m. featuring Keycon 32&33 DJ-THOR. The event takes place at the Royal Canadian Legion, St. James Branch #4, 1755 Portage Avenue. More info at keycon.org.

4 Making light of heartbreak

Winnipeg filmmaker Tyson Caron's "Lovesick" is a romantic comedy with an all-star cast of independent and local actors. Dash, 33, is broke, depressed and still in love with his ex who gets engaged. Everything seems hopeless until he meets the spontaneous Nora. Recently featured at the Whistler Film Festival, "Lovesick" was shot in Winnipeg. Playing at Cinematheque, 100 Arthur St. on Friday, Jan. 27 at 7 p.m. and 9:30 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 28 at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. and Sunday, Jan. 29 at 7 p.m. Visit www.winnipegfilmgroup.com for complete schedule and ticket info.

5 'Run, Forrest, run!'

The chances of getting frostbite on Sunday are a long shot with forecasted temps hovering around -8 C. Perfect weather to take part in the five-mile Frostbite River Run to raise funds for the Riverview Community Centre. The route is through Riverview along Churchill Drive onto the Red River Trail to The Forks and back. The run includes chip timing, draw prizes, medals and a post-race meal. To register and pick-up race kits, head to Riverview Community Centre, 90 Ashland Ave. Friday, Jan. 27 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and Sunday, Jan. 29 from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. The race starts from there at 10 a.m. Visit frostbiteriverrun.ca for details.

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Tough questions at PM's town hall

POLITICS

Pipelines, indigenous issues raise heat at meeting

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau faced some anger over indigenous issues and oil pipeline development during a town-hall meeting Thursday in Winnipeg.

Small groups of protesters scattered throughout the crowd of about 1,200 people held up anti-pipeline signs and shouted "Keep it in the ground."

Another protester, seated directly behind the prime minister, held up a sign that read "Water is sacred."

As a handful of demonstrators challenged him, Trudeau asked for permission to continue and answer people's questions.

"I know you have a voice. I've just heard it," he said.

"I'm asking you can I have permission to continue in my town hall with Canadians who came out to meet with their prime minister?"

Most in the crowd applauded strongly when Trudeau asked the protesters to let him speak.

There were questions about poor housing conditions on reserves, boil-water advisories and high rates of kids in the child welfare system.

Winnipeg is home to Canada's largest urban aboriginal population.

Trudeau admitted his government has much more work to do.

"I have talked about the fact that Canada has failed ... in a fundamental relationship that we were supposed to get right," he said.

"We're not moving as fast as I'd like on that path. I absolutely agree. But it's a difficult path to walk. There are decades of wrongs to undo."

Earlier in the day, Trudeau was greeted by protesters shouting "Water is life" as he walked through the University of Regina to meet students. Trudeau replied that he agreed and continued to make his way down a long corridor packed with students trying to squeeze in a selfie with him.

There were also people carrying placards that said "People over Pipelines."

One man at a Regina café where Trudeau also stopped said: "I've got to give you a little credit, for you to come to these town halls and do what you're doing, well done."

Trudeau said he needs to hear from people who disagree with him.

He got a mostly warm reception at a Winnipeg elementary school where he stopped before making his way to the town hall.

A few hundred kids asked him questions about his childhood and what he likes about being prime minister.

One student asked him why did his father — former prime minister Pierre Trudeau — "give everyone in Western Canada the middle finger?"

"My father had an approach to politics that not everyone agreed with," Trudeau replied.

"But he always thought about Canada."

Trudeau also pointed out the student was in a school with a successful French immersion program because of the elder Trudeau's policies.

The Winnipeg town hall was Trudeau's 10th such meeting in recent weeks.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau visits with students at Robert H. Smith School in Winnipeg, Thursday. One student asked the PM why did his father, Pierre Trudeau, "give everyone in Western Canada the middle finger?" JOHN WOODS/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Protesters shouted as the PM spoke at a town hall at the University of Winnipeg Thursday. JOHN WOODS/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Depot will accept what you can't curb

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Pacific Ave. centre can take yard waste, appliances

Stephanie Taylor
Metro | Winnipeg

Winnipeggers now have a new spot to dump their recyclables.

On Thursday, a new $4.9-million super recycling depot opened its doors on Pacific Ave., making it the second facility of its kind in the city.

The first depot opened in Feb. 2016 at the Brady Road Resource Management Facility for a cost of $5.2 million and nearly three years behind schedule.

The city says 74,929 vehicles have dropped off recyclables, which means nearly 4,000 tonnes of material has been diverted from landfills.

At both depots, Winnipeggers can recycle a variety of household goods, free of charge, that are ineligible for curbside pickup.

The materials accepted range from appliances and scrap metal to electronics, yard waste, tires and motor oil.

Unlike the Brady Road depot that accepts garbage — albeit for a cost — the new facility on Pacific Ave. does not.

The city plans to open a third super depot on Panet Rd. by late 2017.

A fourth could be built, but that depends on the demand from residents, the city says.

The depots are part of an approved garbage and recycling master plan that states the city should reduce the amount of landfill waste and cut down on greenhouse gas emissions.

The city's second 4R depot opened Thursday. STEPHANIE TAYLOR/METRO

Garbage study needed, report says

Before the city moves ahead with a new curbside green bin plan, it needs to first take a microscope to Winnipeg's current garbage and recycling programs.

That's according to a new report headed to Monday's water and waste committee.

The report, prepared by Daryl Doubleday, the city's solid waste manager, is the result of an April 2016 council vote that called for the policy review.

The vote also requested the water and waste department devise a new consultation plan for organics collection, and explore ways the city would reduce the amount of waste that end up in landfill from schools, as well as commercial and industrial centres.

In the new report, Doubleday says the city's Comprehensive Integrated Waste Management Strategy, adopted in 2011, should be reviewed first to ensure the current waste diversion targets make sense. The policy guides how the city does garbage and recycling pick-up with a goal of diverting more than half of all waste from landfills, reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The report says that from 2011 to 2015, the city increased its diversion rate from 18.6 per cent to 31.4 per cent.

"(The past five years) have seen immense changes to Winnipeg's garbage and recycling services, including automated cart collection, leaf and yard waste pick-up, and the establishment of 4R Winnipeg Depots," Doubleday writes.

The report requests city council expend $20,000 to hire a consultant for a review, which would be due back in 2018.

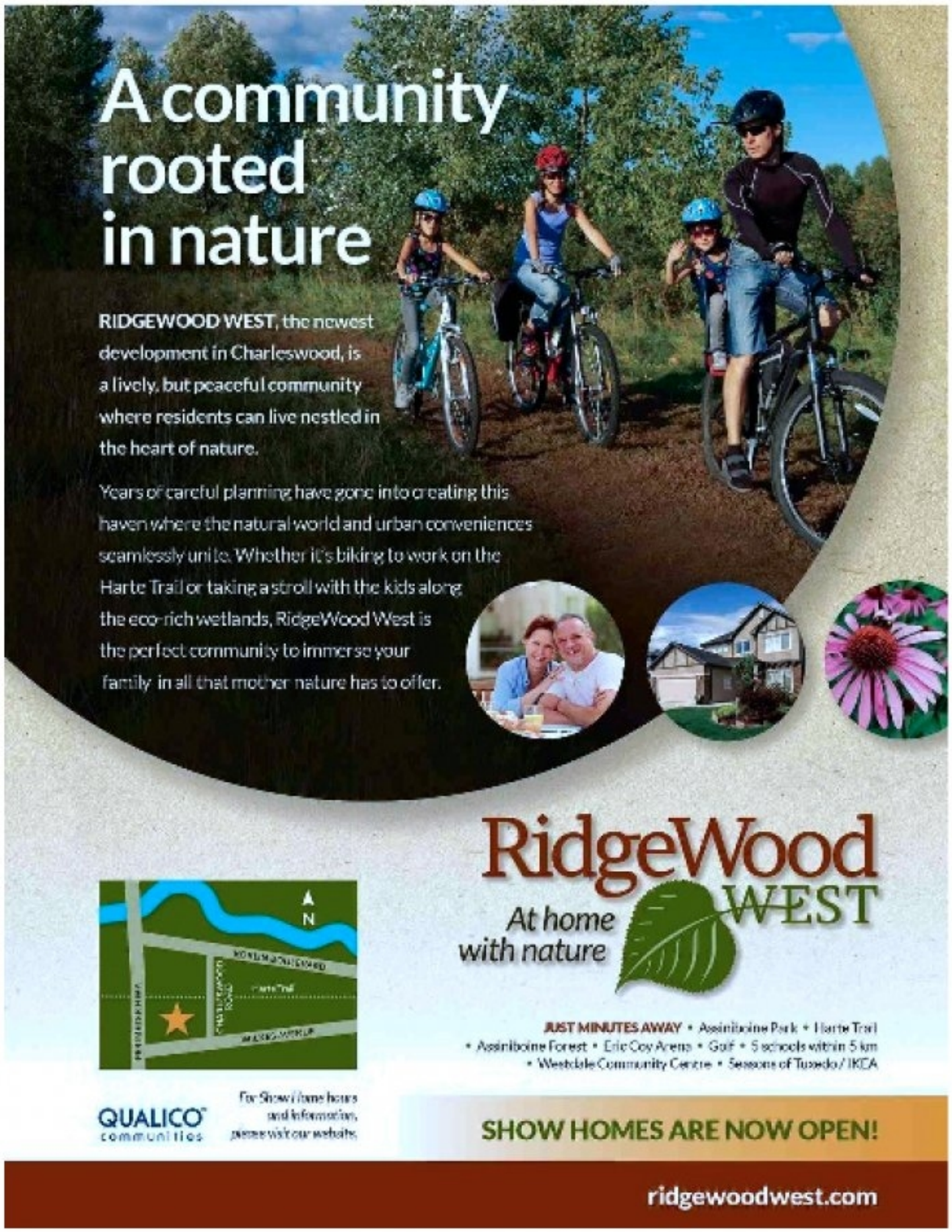
Doubleday says that report will include plans on how the city should tackle the question of organics and waste collection moving forward.

"Nothing has changed. The facts haven't changed. We don't have alternative facts that anything other than if we want to get our waste rate diversion to 50 per cent we need to do curbside pickup of composting or it's not going to happen," Coun. Jenny Gerbasi said Thursday.

She applauded that the report calls for a study on what a provincial or federal carbon tax could mean for the city.

"Carbon pricing could provide a source of revenue for the city to do things that would reduce our greenhouse gas emissions," she said. "The big barrier to the organics was the cost that councillors didn't want to have to go to the constituents for."

STEPHANIE TAYLOR/METRO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The Canadian Museum of Human Rights is beginning the year in a good financial position after receiving funding from the federal government. AARON COHEN

Financial boost for rights museum

GOVERNMENT

Federal funds allow CMHR to focus on Canada 150

Michelle Bailey
For Metro | Winnipeg

After staring down an almost $7-million deficit last year, the Canadian Museum of Human Rights (CMHR) is starting off 2017 "in a strong financial position" now that a long-standing property tax issue has been tackled.

Speaking at the museum's annual public meeting Thursday, Chief Financial Officer Susanne Robertson announced that funding approved last December by the federal government has allowed them to wipe out $8 million in accrued costs for payments in lieu of taxes (PILT) to the City of Winnipeg.

She said they had a $1-million surplus in 2015-16, but it didn't mean much considering what the museum still owed the city, which would have put them "in a negative position."

"We would have really had to look at cutting programs in the future and it probably would have restricted the museum's operations significantly in the future," Robertson said.

The federal funding, which has been extended to all six national museums including the CMHR, will also cover $2.7 million annually going forward for future PILT payments.

"It's certainly a relief from our perspective and we had always hoped we would have this matter dealt with sooner rather than later," said CMHR President and CEO John Young.

Young said they can now concentrate on making 2017 an eventful year for the museum by offering opportunities for public participation in Canada 150 activities.

"We are looking forward to being a venue for Canadians and visitors from around the world to explore Canada's human rights history."

The 2015-16 annual report represents the first full year of operations since the museum officially opened in September 2014.

Young said while they've noticed a minor "dip" in the number of local people who are visiting the museum, it has become a tourism destination of choice for many who come from outside of the city.

BY THE NUMBERS

346K

Visits in the 2015-16 year; 54 per cent from outside of Winnipeg.

20

Awards the museum won for excellence, leadership and innovation.

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> **We have heard stories of people who have had to sell their homes or make tough decisions about where they live, take out second mortgages — this is unacceptable.**
>
> Matt Wiebe

Expand coverage across border: NDP

MEDICINE

New Democrat critic wants U.S. medical costs covered

The Manitoba NDP is calling for the province to expand a program that covers the medical bills of people from rural areas who must seek treatment in some U.S. border states.

NDP health critic Matt Wiebe cites the case of Robin Milne, a man from Sprague who suffered a heart attack in October.

Milne was initially treated at a hospital in Minnesota — which has an emergency medical care agreement with Manitoba — but doctors ordered him transferred to another facility in North Dakota where Manitoba patients aren't covered.

Wiebe says the province should improve health facilities in rural Manitoba but also needs to pay the medical bills of people who must cross the border to get the help they need.

Manitoba health officials were not available for comment.

Wiebe said the government should move quickly to ensure Manitobans are covered if they seek care in either state.

"We think the minister needs to take care of these costs for these families. It is an undue hardship on them," Wiebe said Thursday. "We have heard stories of people who have had to sell their homes or make tough decisions about where they live, take out second mortgages — this is unacceptable."

The province has an agreement to pay the medical bills of people in southeastern Manitoba who seek medical care at two clinics operated by Altru Health System in Roseau and Warroad, Minnesota.

The government estimates that about 850 Manitobans are treated at these facilities each year. The agreement does not cover the costs of transporting patients to other U.S. hospitals.

Wiebe said Milne's case shows the agreement needs updating.

"He was actually having a heart attack. He had no ability to make any decisions," Wiebe said.

$118K

NDP health critic Matt Wiebe says the province has refused to cover medical bills totalling $118,000.

"These were decisions made by medical professionals on where he should go and what kind of treatment he should receive. He was at the mercy of those medical professionals who we think made the right decision on saving his life."

Health Minister Kelvin Goertzen said he has ordered a review of the policy and wants more information about what happened to Milne.

"Additional clarity about eligibility of coverage and services is needed for both residents of Manitoba and the service providers in the United States," he said in an email. THE CANADIAN PRESS

RECIPE TIME

Preparing a Sweet Pickled Cottage Roll

1 WOCS SWEET PICKLED COTTAGE ROLL
1/2 C White Vinegar
3/4 C White Sugar
1 TSP Garlic Powder

Unwrap WOCS Sweet Pickled Cottage Roll and place in a pot. Add enough water to cover the meat. Add white vinegar, white sugar, and garlic powder and bring contents to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for 20 minutes per minute per pound of meat. Drain and serve.

GLAZE SUGGESTION

Mix brown sugar and crab apple jelly to make a paste. Apply paste to the meat. Place in oven at 275°F uncovered until brown.

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Tax havens: Lessons from Britain

PANAMA PAPERS

In 2016, it became leader in exposing tax cheats

The glittering towers and spartan offices of this international financial capital hold billions of illicit offshore dollars, money belonging to countless anonymous company owners who came here to evade taxes and finance fraud, money laundering and terrorism.

That established model of corporate concealment, adopted by Canada, has met its end in Britain.

Last June, Britain became the world leader in exposing tax cheats by requiring corporate registrations to include the names of the real company owners — or "persons with significant control" — and listing the records in a database that anyone can view free online.

The British model, although still new, has been hailed as groundbreaking for disarming the most essential weapon for tax evaders: secrecy. Britain's top financial crime cop considers corporate ownership secrecy "a threat to the economic security of the U.K."

A Union flag flies near Big Ben in London. Britain requires corporate registrations to include the names of the real company owners and list them in an online database. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The Canadian government has displayed no such sense of urgency. In Canada's federal and provincial corporate registries, it is difficult — often impossible — to identify the real owners of companies if they choose to hide behind lawyers, accountants or paper-only directors.

It's the same kind of corporate secrecy that lures money launderers, tax evaders, drug traffickers and embezzlers to offshore tax havens such as Panama, the Seychelles and British Virgin Islands.

Canada's growing reputation as a tax haven has consequences, say experts, including attracting money from criminals and injecting unrestrained foreign investment into real-estate markets that drives up housing costs beyond the reach of many Canadians.

Here's how it works: Let's say you're a foreign business person looking to evade taxes and hide any connection to money flowing into your company.

You may well want to run that cash through an anonymous shell company registered in a place that doesn't require you to list your name on any public document, file taxes or keep any financial records.

Ontario is perfect.

Ontario limited partnerships have become a go-to corporate structure for hiding international wealth legally thanks to secretive business registration and regulations that are being used in ways the province never intended.

Countries around the world are wrestling to close the regulatory black holes that facilitate tax evasion in the aftermath of the Panama Papers revelations, based on the leak of 11.5 million documents obtained by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists and shared in Canada with the Star and the CBC.

Britain, once heavily criticized for failing to control its overseas territories such as the British Virgin Islands, chose the right target for rooting out tax cheats, says Robert Palmer, who runs the anti-money laundering arm of the U.K. research group Global Witness.

Former British business secretary Vince Cable, an architect of the British public registry, said his government acted because the country was "in danger of attracting bad people with bad money."

"Russian oligarchs for an example, they did acquire quite substantial companies here," said Cable, who took on powerful corporate interests in the City of London to create the registry.

"Britain has taken the lead and now it is reasonable to expect for other countries like Canada to look at the experience and see if it has improved things."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

What does your Canada look like?

What is your favourite place in Canada? Is it the street you grew up on, the place where you shared your first kiss, or that secret spot you visit to get away from the hustle and bustle of life? We want to know.

To mark the country's 150th birthday, Metro is launching 150 Postcards, where you get to share your favourite piece of Canada with your friends, neighbours and fellow Canadians. Starting Feb. 1, we will feature one reader's submission each day in Metro editions across the county, on Metronews.ca and our 150postcards Instagram page. On the Friday before the Canada Day long weekend, the most popular postcards we receive will be printed in Metro. METRO

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When you're photobombed by a shark while out surfing

WILDLIFE

10-year-old's unusual experience in Australia

A 10-year-old surfer has had a close encounter with a photobombing shark that shared a wave with him off an Australian beach.

Chris Hasson said Thursday that he was taking photos of his son Eden riding a wave off Samurai Beach at Port Stephens, 180 kilometres north of Sydney, on Tuesday when something unexpected and indistinct caught his eye.

He discovered he had photographed the face of a twisting shark just below the surface with his son on an apparent collision course. "I saw the second photo and (thought) — no way," Hasson said. "I quickly called him in and whistled."

"He (Eden) saw a shape in the wave and thought it was seaweed and felt something as he went over the top — he got his leg rope caught on something — but he thought nothing of it until he saw the photo," Hasson said.

James Cook University shark researcher Andrew Chin said the photographed shark was possibly a small great white.

"From the angle, it looks like the shark was spooked and is rolling away from the board to escape it," Chin said. "There is no way that this is a hunting approach."

Port Stephens is on the northern coast of New South Wales state which has experienced an extraordinary increase in shark attacks since a Japanese tourist was killed by a great white in early 2015.

Hasson said he was back in the surf with Eden and his siblings, aged 12 and 5, on Wednesday to enjoy the final week of the school summer vacation.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Chris Hasson's son, Eden, surfs near what is believed to be a great white shark at Samurai Beach in Port Stephens, Australia. COURTESY CHRIS HASSON VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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GAMBIA

Throngs cheer new president's return

President Adama Barrow returned triumphantly to Gambia on Thursday, nearly two months after winning an election disputed by the country's longtime dictator, to the cheers of hundreds of thousands who jammed the roads in welcome.

"That's my president!" the crowds cried, eager to see Barrow fulfil the promise of democratic reforms and newfound freedoms in this tiny West African nation.

The impasse after the Dec. 1 balloting had brought Gambia to the brink of military intervention, as regional leaders vowed to install the democratically elected Barrow despite legal efforts by longtime ruler Yahya Jammeh to overturn the result of the vote. Barrow had flown to Banjul from Senegal, where he had waited for Jammeh to leave Gambia.

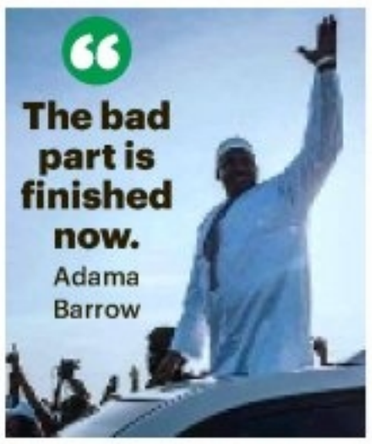
"Barrow! Barrow!" people shouted from atop vehicles as far as the eye could see at sunset Thursday as the president's convoy made its way through Banjul. Women danced on minibuses and the sound of drums and music blared in the streets. Spontaneous parties erupted.

Barrow stood out of the roof of his vehicle and waved as he slowly made his way on a tour of the city and back to his home.

"I am a happy man today," Barrow said amid the crush of his arrival. "I think the bad part is finished now."

Gambians had eagerly awaited Barrow, who has promised to reverse many of the authoritarian policies of Jammeh. The former leader oversaw a government accused of imprisoning, torturing and killing his political opponents.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Gambian President Adama Barrow arrives at Banjul airport in Gambia on Thursday. GETTY IMAGES

CATASTROPHE

Doomsday Clock ticks closer to midnight

Irene Kuan
Metro | Toronto

The Doomsday Clock has moved 30 seconds closer to midnight, meaning the world is just two and a half minutes from the point of existential catastrophe.

In a statement released Thursday, The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists said although the decision to adjust the symbolic clock is often based on examining long-term threats to humanity, this year, the actions and statements of one person — Donald Trump — and the rise in 'strident nationalism' became a major driving factor in the board's decisions.

The board statement said although Trump has only been president for a matter of days, his actions and statements on nuclear weapons and dismissal of scientific claims about the global threat of climate change in the past year were enough for them to move the clock forward by half a minute. It's a jump the board has never made in its 70 year history.

As well, they expressed concern over Trump's "ill-considered" comments about expanding the U.S. nuclear arsenal, lack of openness to expert advice related to international security, and questionable cabinet nominations.

This is the closest to midnight the clock has been since the Cold War in the 1950s, when the U.S. and Soviet Union were testing hydrogen bombs. The clock, which originally hung on a wall at the University of Chicago, was first used to measure the threat of nuclear war, but has included climate change and technologies that would pose a threat to humanity.

SYRIA

Russia urges caution on U.S. plan for safe zones

The Trump administration's expressed interest in setting up safe zones for civilians in Syria was greeted with caution by Russia and Turkey, which have taken the lead in the latest peace efforts. The idea of safe zones was ruled out by the Obama administration for fear it would bring the U.S. into direct conflict with Syrian President Bashar Assad and Russia.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MERLO | DAVIDSON
SETTLEMENT

NOTICE OF CERTIFICATION AND SETTLEMENT APPROVAL HEARING

RCMP GENDER HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION CLASS ACTION

If you are a female or identified as a female and were an RCMP Regular Member (for purposes of this Proposed Settlement includes Regular Members, Special Constables, Cadets, Auxiliary Constables, Special Constable Members, and Reserve Members), Civilian Member or Public Service Employee (for purposes of this Proposed Settlement includes Temporary Civilian Employees) working within the RCMP, this notice may affect your legal rights. Please read it carefully.

Class action lawsuits were initiated alleging gender based harassment and discrimination within the RCMP. The Defendants, while not admitting liability, have agreed to a settlement of these lawsuits. A federal court class action has been certified on consent, conditional on court approval of the settlement.

Who is Eligible for the Proposed Settlement?

To be eligible to participate in the settlement, you must be a member of the class. The class is defined as:

Primary Class Members: female current and former living Regular Members, Civilian Members and Public Service Employees (who are appointed by the Commissioner of the RCMP under the delegated authority of the Public Service Commission pursuant to the Public Service Employment Act, R.S.C., 1985, c. P-32; amended S.C. 2003, c. 22, ss.12, 13) who worked within the RCMP during the Class Period who experienced and/or continue to experience gender and sexual orientation based harassment and discrimination while working in the RCMP during the Class Period, and who have not opted out or are not deemed to have opted out of the Class Action on or before the expiry of the Opt Out Period.

For the purposes of this Agreement "**Regular Members**" includes Regular Members, Special Constables, Cadets, Auxiliary Constables, Special Constable Members, and Reserve Members

For the purposes of this Agreement "**Public Service Employees**" includes Temporary Civilian Employees who, prior to 2014 were appointed under the now-repealed subsection 10(2) of the RCMP Act, R.S.C., 1985, c. R-10;

Secondary Class Members: All persons who have a derivative claim in accordance with applicable family law legislation arising from a family relationship with a member of the Primary Class.

If you **do not** wish to participate in the class action, you must deliver a signed Opt-Out Form to Class Counsel received or postmarked no later than March 29, 2017. If you do not exclude yourself by that date, you will be included in this lawsuit and will be bound by the court's judgement on the settlement. The Opt-Out Form can be obtained from Class Counsel at the address below. It is also available on Class Counsel's websites.

If you have an ongoing lawsuit with respect to gender or sexual orientation based harassment or discrimination in the RCMP, and you wish to participate in the proposed class action settlement, you must discontinue your lawsuit before March 29, 2017. If you do not, you will be deemed by s. 334.21(2) of the Federal Court Rules, SOR/98-106 to have opted out of the class action. Please contact your lawyer to discuss your options.

The Terms of the Proposed Settlement

The settlement contains numerous change initiatives directed at eliminating workplace harassment and discrimination in the RCMP. The settlement also provides compensation for members of the Primary Class who experienced gender or sexual orientation based harassment or discrimination while working in the RCMP during the Class Period. Compensation is available for Secondary Class Members where the Primary Class Member's Claim is assessed at either of the two highest severity levels.

You can obtain a copy of the settlement agreement and the applicable schedules by contacting Class Counsel at the address below. These documents are also available on Class Counsel's websites.

The Approval Hearing and Your Right to Participate

A motion to approve the settlement is scheduled to be heard on May 24, 2017 at 9:30 am at the Federal Court of Canada, Trial Division, in Toronto. Class Counsel will also ask the court to approve an award of fees and disbursements for their work in achieving the settlement.

If you agree with the proposed settlement, you do not have to do anything at this time. If the court approves the settlement, a notice will be published setting out the procedures for submitting a Claim.

If you disagree with the proposed settlement, you have the right to object. You may do so by delivering a letter to Class Counsel in advance of the hearing, which Class Counsel will then provide to the court. In your letter, you should provide your name, contact information, and a brief statement of the nature and reasons for your objection.

What are the Financial Consequences?

If the settlement is approved by the court and you have not opted out of the class action prior to the opt-out deadline, you will be bound by the terms of the settlement.

The defendants have agreed to pay Class Counsel's disbursements and are making a contribution toward class counsel fees. Class Counsel will request a further class counsel fee of 15% plus applicable sales tax payable from the compensation awarded to class members under the settlement. The award of class counsel fees is subject to court approval.

For More Information

For more information about the settlement, contact Class Counsel at:

Klein Lawyers LLP
Attn: Angela Bespflug
Suite 400-1385 West 8th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6H 3V9
Phone: (604) 874-7171 • Fax: (604) 874-7180

Kim Orr Barristers P.C.
Attn: Megan B. McPhee
19 Mercer Street, Suite 400
Toronto, ON M5V 1H2
Phone: (416) 596-1414 • Fax: (416) 598-0601

President Trump: The words still shock

Even now, the concept of the Donald-in-chief retains its dystopian tinge.

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD
From the U.S.

Each day, now, waking up and turning on the radio, two words float out: "President Trump." They're tossed in among the weather by a voice that sounds not at all surprised to utter the phrase.

But I remain shocked. Not electric shocked: I've been awake these past months, after all. Normalization — the fear of the left — and the human urge to accept what you see has downgraded the feeling to a static jolt. A mere flick to the brain.

"Oh, right," I think. "President Trump." Then the newscast goes on, and a smorgasbord of campaign promises and knee-jerk presidential directives come tumbling out of the presenters' measured voices.

One day, Trump is picking a fight with the media over his lies about crowd sizes at his inauguration while simultaneously disrespecting murdered CIA agents, the next he's cutting international and national funding for women's health in a nod to anti-abortion extremists. Quietly, his administration has wiped climate change from the White House website and muzzled Environmental Protection Agency and National Parks staff. He's ordered the wall to be built, and a ban on Syrian refugees, among others, is in the works. He's considering withholding funding from "sanctuary cities" which help illegal immigrants; he's launching an investigation to baseless and disproven claims of massive voter fraud. He might even send federal law enforcement into Chicago to deal with gun crime. Meanwhile, GOP leadership is putting up a mostly unified front. Business leaders are getting in line, meeting with the new president to secure their spot on his good list, lest he sic his Twitter account on them.

Reporters are rushing to keep up on all fronts, with Trump's pronouncement that torture is effective and his family's new $200,000 Mar-a-Lago membership fee, which doubled this month.

"It's chaos," one reporter tweeted.

Or it's the trenches. It turns out Trump was both serious and literal in his campaign. His whims will be orders. His grievances wielded with the weight of the presidency. He was not playing the bombastic, feuding egomaniac for votes. The reality show is the morning news.

When I hear "President Trump," as I'm pouring my coffee, it retains its dystopian tinge. I wonder if this is how people felt in other times of upheaval, going about their morning routines, for example, while the world teetered on nuclear war. There is a dissonance between the normality of the life you've been living, and the political reality into which you've been plunged.

The steady voice of news anchors you know, the work of writers you've come to rely on offer some solace. People you trust are keeping track, countering lies, investigating, analysing. Even the civil service, unused to being exploited for such deeply personal and ideological ends, is acting out, leaking memos to the press and launching angry tweets from rogue Twitter accounts.

It is a luxury, and a great one, that up until this week my mornings have been largely peaceful. I am a novice in fear, waking up to Trump.

U.S. President Donald Trump THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S., Mexican leaders battle about wall

President Donald Trump called on fellow Republicans to help him enact "great and lasting change" at a party retreat Thursday but offered few details. Later his spokesman said the president will seek a 20 per cent tax on Mexican imports to pay for a proposed border wall.

The president was greeted by cheers as he took the stage in a hotel ballroom, telling senators and House members, "This Congress is going to be the busiest Congress in decades - maybe ever."

He addressed lawmakers shortly after Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto cancelled a trip to Washington next week for his first meeting with the new president due to their disagreement over which of their countries would pay to build Trump's promised wall on the border between them.

The wall is part of Trump's plan to halt illegal immigration to the U.S., and he has long said that Mexico will pay. Pena Nieto insists his country will not.

On the flight back to Washington, White House spokesman Sean Spicer told reporters travelling with the president that Trump will seek to impose a 20 per cent tax on Mexican imports to pay for the wall. Congressional approval would be needed for such a step.

But then later, at the White House, Spicer tried to take back his earlier comments by saying the 20 per cent tax is one of several options under consideration and Trump hasn't settled on it.

In Trump's remarks to lawmakers, he cast the cancellation of his engagement with Pena Nieto as a mutual decision, saying they had "agreed to cancel our planned meeting." Trump had tweeted early Thursday that "it would be better to cancel the upcoming meeting" given Pena Nieto's unwillingness to pay for the border wall.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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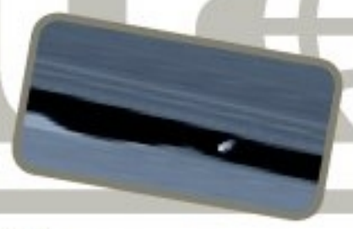
Your essential daily news



NASA's Cassini spacecraft has captured an eerie image of Saturn's moon Daphnis, shot through the rippling rings

DECODED by Genna Buck and Andrés Plana

WHO'S RIGHT? INSIDE THE SUGAR WARS

What is making us fat? The reasons for the obesity epidemic are still a matter of debate, even among experts. It's really hard to study the long-term effects of a given diet. Fat was once nutrition enemy number one, but now some critics are taking aim at sugar. Here are three different views.

What's insulin resistance?
You can think of the hormone insulin as a key that unlocks fat and muscle cells. Your body converts food into simple sugars. When you eat, your blood sugar spikes, and your pancreas releases insulin. Insulin brings your blood sugar down by encouraging muscle cells to absorb sugar and use it for energy, and fat cells to absorb sugar and store it as fat. If you have insulin resistance, you've built up a bit of a tolerance to insulin. You need to secrete more of it in order to have the same effect of your cells, making it harder to keep your blood sugar under control. Some experts, not all, believe insulin resistance is a major factor driving many chronic diseases, including obesity.

The sugar-wary doctor

Dr. Khosrow Adeli, head of clinical biochemistry, SickKids

A little bit of sugar is important. It makes food taste good. But there is no question, from dozens of studies in humans and animals, that sugar, and particularly fructose, causes insulin resistance. When you develop insulin resistance, it can turn into a number of chronic conditions, including obesity and Type II diabetes. Too much fructose also causes high blood pressure and fatty liver disease. And the effects tend to be worse if you're also eating a lot of fat and other carbohydrates. Fructose and sugar are a problem not just because of all the calories they contain. If you compare them to calories from, say, fat, the fructose calories are much more harmful. B**ottom Line:** Along with lack of exercise and overeating, sugar, and especially fructose, is one of the main reasons for our obesity epidemic. Adults should cap fructose intake at 50 g per day.

The crusading journalist

Gary Taubes, author, The Case Against Sugar

For the past century or so, the worst we've said about sugar is that it's empty calories. The idea was that you could exercise it away and balance it by eating less of other things. That is naïve. There's a significant amount of evidence that sugar is a fundamental cause of the obesity and diabetes epidemics worldwide. Something in our diet and lifestyle is causing it, and sugar should be the prime suspect. We don't say **too much** smoking causes lung cancer. We say smoking causes lung cancer. If I'm right, and I clearly think and hope I am, doctors are going to be telling you sugar is killing you, don't eat it. **Bottom line:** Sugar kills; minimize your intake.

The skeptical scientist

Dr. David C.W. Lau, professor, University of Calgary

Gary Taubes's ideas are oversimplified. I've been doing research on obesity for a long time, so I'm very familiar with the arguments about sugar and insulin resistance. We develop insulin resistance as we gain more body fat. That is the body's natural defence mechanism to stop you from gaining more fat. It's one reason we tend to stay at a constant weight. But you usually won't become insulin resistant to the point that insulin doesn't work, unless you are prone to developing Type 2 diabetes. **Bottom line:** The amounts of carbs, fat, or other major nutrients in your diet don't matter as much as excess calories do. That's what causes weight gain.

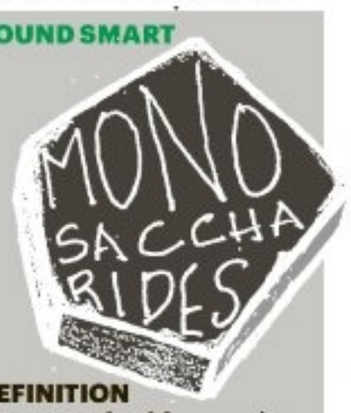
Your week in science

MAY WARREN/METRO

SCIENTISTS MARCH
As a U.S. administration steeped in climate-change denial and other anti-science views takes power, scientists are planning to storm Washington, D.C. and demand evidence-based policy — after peer review of course.

METALLIC HYDROGEN
Imagine a superconducting rocket fuel, solid at room temperature and explosive enough to propel spaceships. Since 1935, the idea of solid metal hydrogen has been just that. Now Harvard scientists have created it IRL, by compressing hydrogen at 71.7 million lbs per square inch.

SOUND SMART



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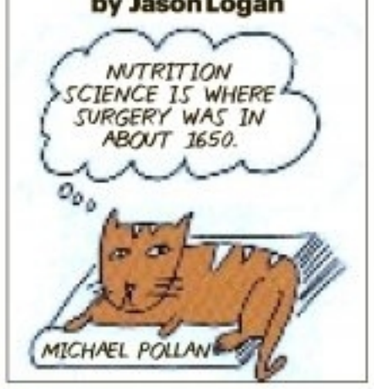
PHILOSOPHER CAT
by Jason Logan



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MOVIES MUSIC TELEVISION DIGITAL

Milla Jovovich returns to the big screen for the seventh, and possibly last, chapter of the Resident Evil film franchise. CONTRIBUTED

Resident Evil's teaching moment

ACTION HORROR

The franchise is a big money maker despite harsh ratings

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada

Since 2002 Milla Jovovich has played a genetically altered zombie fighter with telekinetic powers in six Resident Evil films.

Like the undead fleshbags who populate these based-on-a-videogame movies, you can't seem to kill this franchise, although the title of this weekend's Resident Evil: The Final Chapter seems to indicate the end is near.

But just because the Resident Evil movies aren't Shakespeare doesn't mean we can't learn something from them. Here's what I took away from Jovovich and Company in the last thirteen years:

1. The undead have really, really bad aim.

2. No matter what stunt she has just performed, whether it's plummeting nineteen stories down an abandoned mine shaft, or battling legions of bad guys, Mila's hair will, at most, only look slightly tousled, as if Vidal Sassoon had just finished running his magic fingers through her locks.

3. The amount of rainfall in the future makes Vancouver look arid.

4. To act in one of these movies you must perfect one of two facial expressions: a. steely determination, or b. uncontrolled rage (which can be alternated with a sadistic smile if necessary).

5. Characters will say, "What the hell is going on here?" when it is quite clear what the heck is going on.

6. Most of the people to survive the deadly plague that destroyed most of humanity look like Abercrombie & Fitch pinups.

7. Why take the stairs when you can drive a Rolls Royce down an escalator?

So there you have it — lessons learned.

Despite legendary director Jean-Luc Godard's claim that, "All you need for a movie is a gun and a girl," both of which are amply on display in the Resident Evil movies, they still feel more like a videogame projected on a big screen than a movie.

But who cares what I or other film critics think? These movies have been phenomenally successful and for over a decade have proven to be critic-proof. Roger Ebert placed Resident Evil on his most hated films list in 2005 and called its sequel, "an utterly meaningless waste of time," adding, "Parents: If you encounter teenagers who say they liked this movie, do not let them date your children."

Leonard Maltin added to the pile on calling Resident Evil: Apocalypse "tiresome" while Dark Horizons said the third movie, Afterlife was, "perhaps the first 3D motion picture to simulate the experience of watching paint dry," and yet the splatter flick went on to gross $300 million dollars worldwide.

Critics aside, others in the film biz love the movies. Avatar director James Cameron called Resident Evil his biggest guilty pleasure and the Ontario Media Development Corporation acknowledged the Toronto-shot Afterlife as the most successful production in Canadian feature film history.

Bottom line is that in total, the series has grossed almost $1 billion — a feat recognized by the Guinness World Records Gamer's Edition who called the Resident Evil films "the most successful movie series to be based on a video game," awarding them with the record for Most Live-Action Film Adaptations of a Video Game.

MOVIE RATINGS by Richard Crouse

Gold	★★
Trespass Against Us	★★
The Red Turtle	★★★★
Toni Erdmann	★★★★

HOW RATING WORKS

★★★★	SEE IT
★★★	WORTHWHILE
★★	UP TO YOU
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A flashy blond in Bre-X gold scandal

INTERVIEW

Even a gaudy hairdo was fine for Bryce Dallas Howard

Steve Gow
For Metro Canada

It wasn't until Bryce Dallas Howard saw herself in a crazy permed wig that she truly found her character for the new movie Gold.

"You have to kind of see it to understand who that person is," admitted the 35-year-old star about trying on gaudy hairdos to unearth her character.

"It's a little punny, but that's when I got to try on different versions of her. Eventually we landed on curly-haired, big-boobed and clothes that were a size too tight for her."

Loosely paralleling the Canadian-based Bre-X scandal of the '90s, Gold excavates the account of a flighty prospector (played by a balding, chubby Matthew McConaughey) whose incredible Indonesian gold strike dupes thousands of investors out of millions of dollars — until the fortune isn't what it appears to be.

Playing the obsessed tycoon's whip-smart girlfriend, Howard was shocked to learn the incredible twists of the real swindle.

"My character was invented so it wasn't really something that was a big part of my preparation. Even now I'm learning more details," laughed Howard, of the adaptation that relocates the action from Alberta to Reno, Nev. "It's so bizarre to me that the story that it's based on took place in Canada; it feels like such a specifically American story because this story represents the potentials and evils of capitalism."

Howard's own tale is certainly one that has been nothing but blessed by potential.

Having set out in Hollywood in 2004, the daughter of legendary filmmaker Ron Howard may have hit early pay dirt with hits like The Village and Spider-Man 3, but the real treasure has only now arrived by balancing big-budget blockbusters like Jurassic World and quiet personal downtime.

"I'm more excited about stuff I'm getting to do than I've ever been," said Howard, currently preparing for the forthcoming Jurassic World sequel.

"But I've never lost my privacy, never had a massive change in lifestyle. I've been able to be home for long stretches of time with having kids (and) the fact that I've gotten to go back to working again is not something I take for granted."

MOVIES

Netflix changing the game for entertainers

"When I was younger, the gravy train of the movie business drove me bananas," Bryce Dallas Howard said of the changing film scene. "There's like a democratization of entertainment happening with Netflix and the cream rising to the top – it's a great time to be a storyteller."

Bryce Dallas Howard and Matthew McConaughey in a scene from Gold. SUBMITTED

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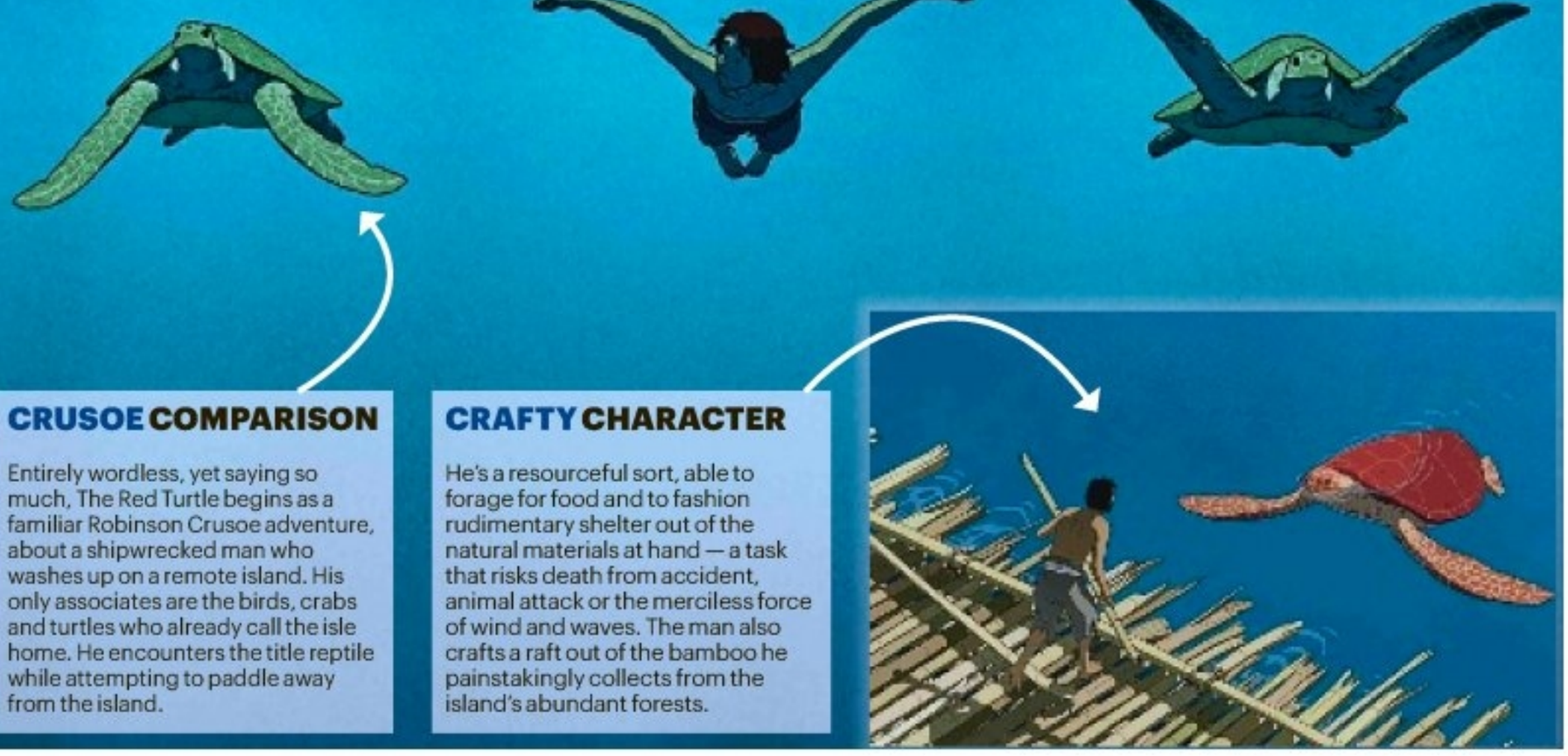
Peter Howell/Torstar News Service



AWESOME AWARDS

This symbol-laden fable by Dutch-British writer/director Michael Dudok de Wit is nominated for an Oscar for best animated feature. He previously won an Academy Award in 2001 for the animated short, Father and Daughter. The stunning, pastel-shaded film is co-produced by Tokyo-based anime giant, Studio Ghibli.

CRUSOE COMPARISON

Entirely wordless, yet saying so much, The Red Turtle begins as a familiar Robinson Crusoe adventure, about a shipwrecked man who washes up on a remote island. His only associates are the birds, crabs and turtles who already call the isle home. He encounters the title reptile while attempting to paddle away from the island.

CRAFTY CHARACTER

He's a resourceful sort, able to forage for food and to fashion rudimentary shelter out of the natural materials at hand — a task that risks death from accident, animal attack or the merciless force of wind and waves. The man also crafts a raft out of the bamboo he painstakingly collects from the island's abundant forests.

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Two features of masterful horror

MOVIES

Blind Sun and Dearest Sister are creepy good

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada

Joyce A. Nashawati's pre-apocalyptic film Blind Sun sets xenophobia and alienation against the sunny backdrop of Athens, Greece. Dearest Sister is Mattie Do's story of Laotian lottery ghosts and communication with the dead.

They're two very different films but are bonded by the director's shared love of the horror genre, their global outlook and the streaming source Shudder, which will feature both films exclusively in Canada.

"I always adored genre films and watched them closely," says Nashawati on the line from Tokyo where she is researching her second film. "Films that are not totally subjected to realism; that play with what cinema can do with the imaginary. Also, because they come from darkness, I think they play with the conscience of the spectator. They give and take things, which is kind of playful."

Mattie Do, the first female Laotian director to make a full-length feature, was born in Los Angeles, but now lives in a country that didn't even have movie theatres when she moved there in 2010.

Dearest Sister, starring Vilouna Phetmany, was directed by Mattie Do — the first female Laotian director to make a full-length feature. CONTRIBUTED

She admits "our film growth is rocky," but adds, "people outside may see it as challenging to work in a developing country with no infrastructure but at the same time no one here tells me what stories I have to make. When I walk into the Department of Cinema, they know who I am because we have so few filmmakers in the country but it is easy for us to sit down and have a very adult discussion. Whereas if I was facing down some board of directors I might not be able to have the creative control I do here."

A global perspective comes naturally to Nashawati who grew up between Beirut, Accra, Kuwait and Athens.

"My past was very global without being a choice," she says. "Blind Sun was made by someone who is Lebanese, with a French producer, you're watching it in Canada and we're now talking while I'm in Japan. This is the way things are today. It is exciting. It is interesting that it is (happening) when politics is going the opposite way and closing things."

Blind Sun stars Laurene Brun (above), Ziad Bakri and Yannis Stankoglou. CONTRIBUTED

The pair have very different styles — Do's film is a slow burner, Nashawati's a nightmarish thriller — but both agree modern technology has made it possible for them to turn their wild visions into movies.

Nashawati thinks it has never been easier to make films, even if you're "someone who is outside the circle of filmmaking or someone who isn't from a bourgeois background."

"If you adore filmmaking today," she says, "this a great time to know you can actually make a film and it can be shown."

Do says foreign directors are given a big leg up by streaming services like Shudder who are able to take chances on offbeat films.

"With Shudder I feel people can explore more different tastes and sub-genres of genres. If I described Dearest Sister, a Laos film about a lottery ghost and a girl who is going blind, would you pick up a ticket for that movie? Maybe not. But if you could sit in the comfort of your own home, pick up your remote or your computer and say, 'Look at all these movies. That's random, there's a Laos movie. What's Laos like?' You can just click on it. It feels like a safe investment."

Dearest Sister is streaming now. Blind Sun will be available Feb. 9.

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Your essential daily news

After years of draught, California ski resorts see record snowfall

5 ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES TO HAVE IN ECUADOR

With four distinct eco-systems, Ecuador is more than just a jumping-off point for the Galapagos. Exploring the interior delivers Andes mountain magic and Amazon jungle surprises. You can visit Ecuador all year round. January to May are the warmest months, but also the wettest. June to December tends to be cooler, and crowds are rare. **DOUG WALLACE/FOR METRO**

DOUG WALLACE/FOR METRO

1 Explore the capital

Quito is a series of mini-neighbourhoods, each with a different essence and identity. Old Town brims with historic buildings, churches and museums. La Marsical comes alive at five, with young locals and tourists spilling out of the bars and restaurants near Plaza Foch. Head over to Calle de la Ronda for an authentic Ecuadorian snack and a happy-hour two-for-one. Cabs cost next to nothing, so you can skip the too-busy bus.

JODI BERNSTEIN/FOR METRO

2 Get sporty

Adventure sports abound in Baños in south-central Ecuador, a relaxing spa town best known for its paragliding, canyoneering and zip lining, as well as its picturesque parks, hilltop hikes and calming waters. Spring for a massage at one of the spas or pop into the local mineral baths for $2, and do the hot-and-cold healing-water circuit.

DOUG WALLACE/FOR METRO

3 Hit the highlands

A trip up the winding highways to the highlands nets you volcanic vistas, indigenous realism and misty forest. The city of Otavalo, in a lake region known for its textiles, has the largest outdoor market in South America, with row after row of stalls selling crafts and souvenirs. Spend a night at 200-year-old Hacienda Pinsaqui nearby, and enjoy a canelazo in the legendary bar — a spiked cinnamon tea.

TOURS

G Adventures offers a nine-day Ecuador tour every month throughout 2017 as part of its National Geographic Journeys adventure series.

DOUG WALLACE/FOR METRO

4 Journey to the jungle

Journey into the jungle for a night or three at one of the remote lodges in and around Yasuni National Park, accessible only by motorized canoe. You get the full rainforest effect communing with monkeys, fishing for piranha, scanning treetops for rare birds, and watching parrots play along the clay riverbanks. Local community visits yield eye-opening simplicity, a vibrant culture and warm hospitality.

DOUG WALLACE/FOR METRO

5 Eat local

Traditional Ecuadorian food is plentiful, reasonably priced and delicious, particularly the barbecue. Fresh fish, fried chicken and churrasco beef dishes are dolled up with a variety of homestyle hot sauces, patatas fritas, flavoured rice or deep-fried plantain. Steer clear of the street food, as your stomach may not react as positively as your eyes, but do step outside the taste-bud box and experience some of the authentic delicacies. **Doug Wallace's trip was sponsored by GAdventures.com, which did not approve or review this story.**

Where great golf is par for the course

NEVADA

Top courses just a short trip from the Vegas Strip

Brian Kendall
For Metro Canada

Las Vegas offers temptations that would make Caligula blush.

But Sin City is many things, not least an outstanding golf destination. On a recent visit, I played several exceptional courses, whacked balls at newly opened Topgolf Las Vegas — and between rounds dined like a sated emperor in dining rooms that included, most memorably, Nobu Restaurant in Caesars Palace.

Part of the beauty of golf in Las Vegas is that several top courses are just a short cab ride from the Strip, eliminating the need for a rental car.

Next door to the Mandalay Resort and Casino is Bali Hai Golf Club, a gorgeous Schmidt-Curley design offering views of the towering casinos from tees and greens. Golf purists might prefer Desert Pines Golf Club, also in the heart of the city. This Carolina sand hills-style design by the great Pete Dye is lined with more than 4,000 pines.

Mexican-American professional BMX rider and television personality Ricardo Laguna tees off at Topgolf Las Vegas. CONTRIBUTED

Another must-play course right in town is Bear's Best Las Vegas, featuring 18 reproductions of holes selected by Jack Nicklaus from the more than 270 courses he has designed around the world.

Tribute courses like Bear's Best are a natural fit in a town where giant-sized knockoffs of the Eiffel Tower and the Statue of Liberty loom over the throngs of fun-seekers wandering the Strip day and night.

At Royal Links Golf Club homage is paid to the greatest holes found at the hallowed links that have hosted British Opens.

> **This is a city that almost demands at least one big splurge every visit. Mine was at Nobu Restaurant in Caesars Palace.**

A highlight is the recreation of Royal Troon's famous par-three Postage Stamp, which at 123 yards is the shortest hole in the Open rotation.

Other outstanding courses in or near Las Vegas include Las Vegas Paiute Golf Resort, Cascata, TPC Las Vegas and Las Vegas National Golf Club, famous as the site of Tiger Woods' first PGA Tour victory in 1996.

And a popular new attraction for golfers, Topgolf Las Vegas, opened last May in the glittering heart of downtown. The latest in a growing U.S.-wide chain of deluxe driving ranges, Topgolf features four levels of hitting bays, hundreds of HDTVs, a stage for live concerts, swimming pools, private VIP rooms, and even a Callaway golf fitting centre. Golfers score points by hitting targets on the range.

It's all wonderfully entertaining. Indeed, my visit to Topgolf made me wonder if I was looking at the future of golf. Regional Topgolf champions recently competed in Las Vegas for a grand prize of $50,000 U.S.

Pricing at Topgolf starts at $30 U.S. per hour for a group of up to six people, a bargain as Las Vegas entertainments go.

But this is a city that almost demands at least one big splurge every visit. Mine was at Nobu Restaurant in Caesars Palace, part of a wildly acclaimed fine dining chain featuring the Asian fusion cuisine of Nobuyuki "Nobu" Matsuhisa.

Specialties include black cod miso (Robert De Niro's favourite), rock shrimp tempura, and yellowtail sashimi with jalapeno and squid pasta. In all my golf travels, I've rarely — if ever — dined better.

For more golf travel stories, visit Brian's website at canadiangolftraveller.com

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metro SPORTS
Your essential daily news

Venus and Serena Williams will face off in the Australian Open final on Saturday in Melbourne. CLIVE BRUNSKILL/GETTY IMAGES ILLUSTRATION

Sister act back in major final after 8-year gap

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Serena, Venus in celebratory mood ahead of women's finale

Win or lose, Serena Williams sees another all-sister final at the Australian Open as cause for celebration.

The 35-year-old Williams arrived in Australia bidding for a 23rd Grand Slam title, aiming to break the Open-era record she shares with Steffi Graf. By winning, she'd also regain the No. 1 ranking she lost after her U.S. Open semifinal exit.

She doesn't enjoy the suspense, or talk about the number. Her older sister, Venus, knows that better than anyone after their two decades of competing together in majors.

Now the 36-year-old Venus is the potential roadblock, back in a major final for the first time since she lost the previous all-Williams Grand Slam final at Wimbledon in 2009.

"I just feel like no matter what happens, we've won," Serena said. "A Williams is going to win this tournament."

Venus hasn't added to her seven major titles since Wimbledon in 2008, but is in her best form since being diagnosed with energy-sapping Sjogren's syndrome in 2011.

In fact, she was the first Williams into the 2017 final, rallying to beat 25-year-old CoCo Vandeweghe — the only player in the women's semifinals who was younger than 34 by a score 6-7 (3), 6-2, 6-3. A jubilant Venus could barely contain her emotions after clinching a spot in the final on her fourth match point, putting her hands to her face, her jaw dropping, before she crossed her arms over her heart and did a stylish pirouette.

> **No matter what happens, we've won. A Williams is going to win this tournament.**
> Serena Williams

Feeling like "it was in my hands to force this Williams final" in the subsequent match, six-time Australian Open champion Serena overwhelmed 34-year-old Mirjana Lucic-Baroni 6-2, 6-1 of Croatia.

By the time Roger Federer beat fourth-seeded Stan Wawrinka 7-5, 6-3, 1-6, 4-6, 6-3 in an all-Swiss night match to became the oldest man to reach a Grand Slam final since Ken Rosewall made the 1974 U.S. Open final at 39, they were calling it Throwback Thursday at Melbourne Park.

Three players who can combine for 46 Grand Slam titles and 106 years in age advanced to a final one after the other. Federer, returning from six months out to rest his injured left knee, will next play Sunday against either 14-time major champion Rafael Nadal and Grigor Dimitrov.

With the Williamses locked in for Saturday night, expectations are rising for another vintage Roger-Rafa bout.

"It's going to be special either way — one is going to go for his first slam or it's the epic battle with Rafa," Federer said. "All I care about is that I can win."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL IN BRIEF

Tortorella to miss games due to family emergency

Columbus Blue Jackets coach John Tortorella has returned to Ohio because of a family emergency, keeping him out of both Thursday night's game with Nashville and the NHL All-Star Game this weekend.

The Blue Jackets announced Tortorella's departure Thursday. "There is a personal matter that requires my attention that will force me to leave the team temporarily and miss the All-Star Game," Tortorella said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jackets' Atkinson to take Malkin's All-Star place

Columbus Blue Jackets forward Cam Atkinson has been added to the Metropolitan Division roster for the this weekend's NHL all-star event in Los Angeles.

Atkinson leads Columbus and is tied for eighth in the league with 46 points in 47 games. His 24 goals are tied with the Kings' Jeff Carter for second most in the NHL. He replaces Pittsburgh Penguins forward Evgeni Malkin, who is out with a lower-body injury.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

B.C.'s Adam Hadwin shot a 66 while leader Justin Rose of England shot a 65 at Torrey Pines in San Diego. GETTY IMAGES

GOLF

Hadwin just off lead as Tiger struggles

Canada's Adam Hadwin, who shot 59 last week in the California desert, shot a 66 in the opening round of the Farmer's Insurance on Thursday in San Diego.

Justin Rose set the early pace with a 7-under 65 on the North course at Torrey Pines.

Coming off back-to-back birdies to reach 1-under par, Tiger Woods followed with three straight bogeys, and then a double bogey when he hooked his tee shot into a ravine. A birdie on his final hole gave him a 4-over 76 in his first PGA Tour competition in 17 months.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Not everybody's sold on bye week

NHL

Teams adjust on fly to new scheduling wrinkle

Mike Smith felt weird.

The All-Star goaltender for Phoenix knew other teams were playing while he and the rest of the Coyotes were enjoying a week off. He filled his time by sledding with his kids and not doing too much of anything.

"It's been great," Smith said. "I've got to spend some quality time with my family, my kids. Nothing crazy, pretty chilled and pretty relaxed."

A five-day bye week for each team is a new wrinkle added to the NHL this season so players can get a breather during the second half of a grueling, 82-game grind. The players' union negotiated for it last year in exchange for agreeing to the 3-on-3 tournament that replaced the traditional All-Star Game.

The NFL-style bye week will return next season or in 2018-19 — depending on whether NHL players go to the Pyeongchang Olympics — because that 3-on-3 All-Star format is in place Sunday in Los Angeles.

Players are widely in favour of the extra time off, even though it compresses the schedule for the rest of the year, but it isn't as popular among coaches and general managers. Washington Capitals coach Barry Trotz is concerned about injuries when a team coming off a bye plays an opponent that has been in action. Philadelphia Flyers general manager Ron Hextall isn't a big fan of the concept in general.

"I think it's ridiculous," Hextall said recently. "The most asinine thing I've ever seen."

Old-school hockey people are characteristically resistant to change, but current players love it. Players' feedback from the 2014 Sochi Olympics was that the time off re-energized them for later in the season.

The Penguins topped the Lightning 6-2 in their first game after their bye week before losing three straight. GETTY IMAGES

As All-Stars gather in L.A. this weekend, a lot of players will go on vacation but they also believe the best in the NHL deserve a break, too.

The Pittsburgh Penguins and New York Islanders were the first to go on their byes Jan. 1, and the Anaheim Ducks will be the last to come off theirs March 2. Trotz and the Capitals have been charting results coming out of the bye week in preparation for their break in mid-February.

When the bye week idea came about, Trotz sent a proposal to the NHL to have groups of teams take bye weeks together so they're in the same shape and timing and injuries don't pile up. Even better, the intent in the future is to have half the league off the five days before All-Star Weekend and the other half the five days after to make it more even across the board.

No matter the timing, bye weeks make for a difficult adjustment back to game shape.

"These guys are used to playing the game every day and touching the puck every day, and when you take them away from that, their timing, I think their game timing tends to establish a little bit of rust," Penguins coach Mike Sullivan said. "I think that's what happens in professional sports when these athletes are used to honing their craft day in and day out."

Winger Carl Hagelin felt some of that rust in Pittsburgh's first game back Jan. 8 with his stick handling and execution. But he also felt some extra energy in his legs.

"It's five full days off and you get to recover and heal some bumps and bruises," Ottawa Senators centre Chris Kelly said. "But that being said, we played 17 in 30 days to start a season. That's very unusual in the NHL, especially when you're competing against baseball and the NFL. Most times when you're playing 17, 18 a month, it's March. That's maybe the bit of the downside to it."

Even with that caveat, players will gladly take the extra rest that comes with the bye week.

"Our schedules, you don't really get to take vacations ever," Capitals goaltender Braden Holtby said. "It's good for family life, and playing is better when family's good." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

444

According to the On The Forecheck blog, teams will play a total of 444 sets of back-to-backs this season, up from 412 in 2015-16

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ENGLISH LEAGUE CUP

United eye Wembley after taming Tigers

Manchester United reached the English League Cup final despite surrendering its 17-match unbeaten record with a 2-1 loss to Hull in the second leg of their semifinal on Thursday.

United, which won the first leg 2-0, advanced with a 3-2 win on aggregate and will play Southampton in the final at Wembley Stadium on Feb. 26.

On-loan striker Oumar Niasse scored the consolation winner with an 85th-minute tap-in.

Paul Pogba GETTY IMAGES

Tom Huddlestone gave the hosts the lead at KCOM Stadium by converting a 35th-minute penalty, awarded for Marcos Rojo's tug on Harry Maguire at a corner. Paul Pogba equalized from close range in the 66th, a bright spot in an otherwise disappointing display by the France midfielder. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Lincicome shoots 9-under

Brittany Lincicome shot a tournament-record 9-under 64 on Thursday to take the first-round lead in the LPGA Tour's season-opening Pure Silk Bahamas Classic.

Lincicome played a six-hole stretch at Ocean Club in 6 under, capping the run with an eagle on the par-5 seventh hole. She added birdies on 11, 14 and 15, and had only 24 putts - the first a 30-footer for par on No. 1.

Canada's Brooke Henderson closed with a 72. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Westbrook gets all-star spot

Russell Westbrook and Kevin Durant are teammates again. Gordon Hayward, DeAndre Jordan and Kemba Walker are about to get their first opportunity on the All-Star stage.

Westbrook — the NBA's scoring leader and triple-double machine — was among the 14 reserves that included Toronto's Kyle Lowry selected by the league's coaches for the All-Star Game that will be played in New Orleans on Feb. 19. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CFL

Carter and Glenn reunite as Riders

Duron Carter and Kevin Glenn are together again.

The veteran receiver signed as a free agent Thursday with the Saskatchewan Roughriders. The move comes two days after Glenn, who's entering his 17th CFL season, joined the club after being released by the Winnipeg Blue Bombers.

Glenn and Carter were teammates in Montreal last season before Glenn was dealt to Winnipeg on Sept. 11. Glenn started nine of the Als' first 10 games but was relegated to backup duties behind Rakeem Cato after the club won just three.

Duron Carter THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

"I really appreciate that (being reunited with Glenn) because last year ... I felt like we were really clicking," Carter said during a conference call. "The opportunity to play with him again definitely feels great." THE CANADIAN PRESS

MAKE IT TONIGHT

Comforting Slow Cooker Chicken Stew

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

Just get your ingredients into the slow cooker in the morning and all the work of dinner is all done.

Ready in 6 hours 10 minutes
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 6 hours 10 minutes
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 6 chicken thighs
- 1 potato, peeled and cubed
- 1 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 onions, chopped
- 4 stalks celery, chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 1 Tbsp fresh thyme (1 tsp dried)
- 1 or 2 bay leaves
- 1/4 cup flour
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken stock
- 1 cup fresh or frozen peas
- 1/2 cup light cream

Directions

1. In a Dutch oven or high-sided skillet, sauté onions, celery and carrots in splash of vegetable oil for about five minutes.

2. Add flour, thyme and bay leaves and stir for a minute. Add stock and stir until smooth. Simmer for 3 or 4 minutes until sauce thickens.

3. Add the potatoes and good pinch of salt and pepper.

4. Place chicken thighs in the bottom of slow cooker and spoon the vegetable mixture over. Seal and set for 6 hours.

5. Add peas and cream and cook for 10 more minutes. Serve plain or over mashed potatoes.

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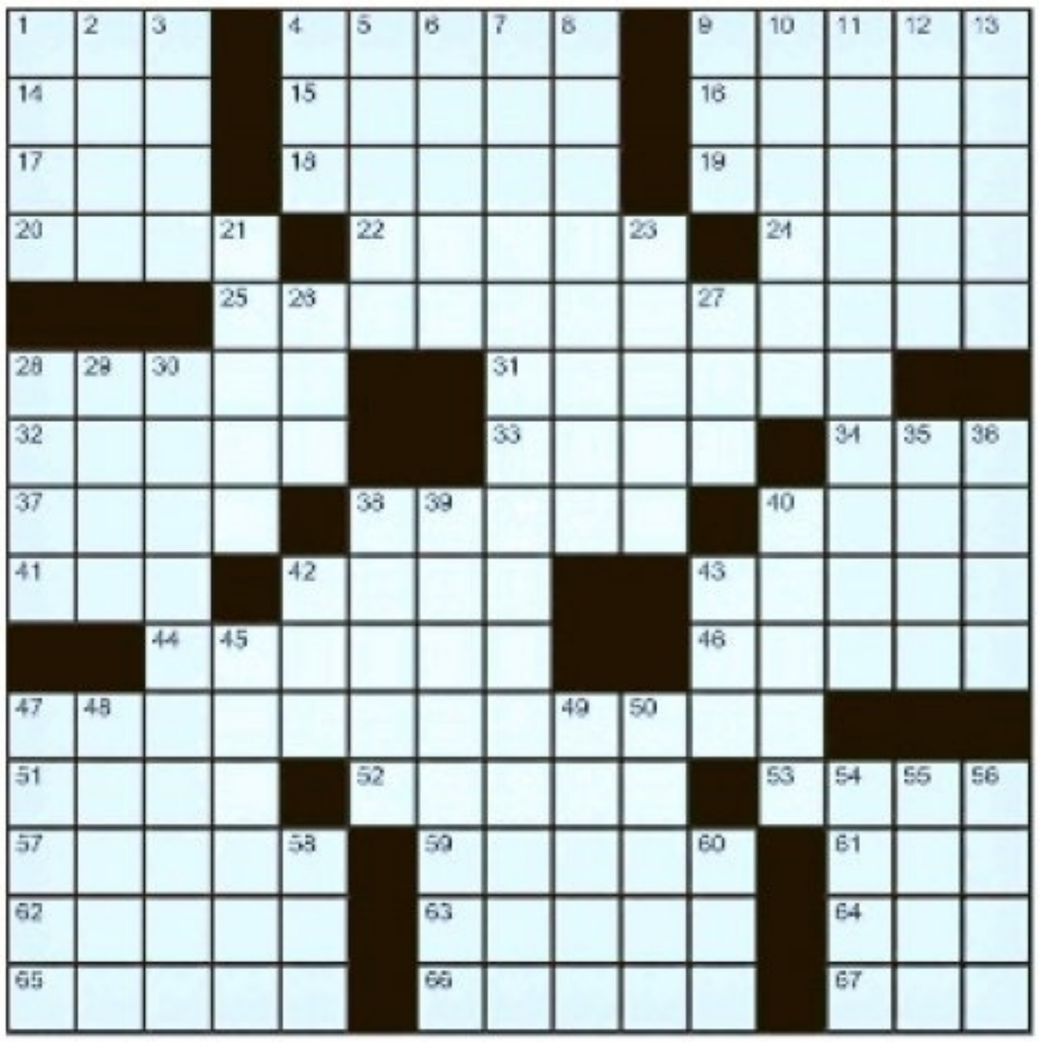
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. "Fancy that!" [pl.]
4. Genesis brother's namesakes
9. "Pretty Little _"
14. Collagen target
15. Medical gig for George Clooney on '90s TV: 2 wds.
16. "I challenge you to _ _!" (Sword-fight starter)
17. Caustic solution
18. Princes' "_ _ the Times"
19. Gladiator's 351
20. Goes off course
22. High wave
24. _ _ can (One-of-some spotted in the pantry)
25. Canadian scientist (b.1862 - d.1941) who was a recent Google Doodle: 2 wds.
28. Penned up
31. Swimsuits brand
32. Overturn
33. Street sort
34. Goose egg
37. Twisted
38. Sheathes, as with metal
40. Ms. Horne
41. Tree chopper
42. Elinor _ (British romance novelist)
43. Devoutness
44. Facing
46. Some chocolate treats
47. Irving _ Inc., headquartered in Halifax
51. Prefix with 'are' (Land measure)
52. Contempt
53. Heartbeat read-outs, commonly
57. The Hunter constellation
59. Green Day's "When _ _ Around"
61. Small battery
62. Happen as a result
63. Toast in a tavern!
64. PC information units
65. _ voce (Softly)
66. Particular sports network awards
67. Iris locale

DOWN
1. "_ McBeal"
2. "Howdy!": 2 wds.
3. Disgorge
4. Bronze Roman money
5. Nova Scotia island in the area of the Gulf of Maine and Bay of Fundy
6. Artist Mr. Degas
7. Section of the Rideau Canal with three vessel lift stations which are numbered 14, 15 and 16: 3 wds.
8. Keeping-track-of-game-points aid
9. Lake: French
10. Personhood proof: 2 wds.
11. "Going once, going twice..." professional
12. "The Beachcombers" character
13. Embark embarrassedly
21. "_ of a Woman" (1992)
23. Utopias
26. Math verb
27. Wide shoe width
28. Havana's locale
29. Top
30. Occupation of #25-Across, Botanist/_
35. Go _ detail (Elaborate)
36. Potato chips brand
38. North Pole surname
39. Put words to music as Tim Rice, Brit-style
40. Vassal
42. American Pres. monogram after Bill Clinton
43. Cook's need
45. Decide not to enroll or select: 2 wds.
47. Sandals and sneakers
48. "Tell _ _" by The Zombies
49. Sag
50. When flowers begin to bloom: 2 wds.
54. Candles-topped dessert
55. Eva's "Desperate Housewives" character, to pals
56. Mailing encl.
58. Retro's opposite
60. Pro golfer Ernie

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
Don't get hung up on the fact that you feel a bit lonely or cut off from others today. It's just one of those things. We all have days like this. Plus, lots of people feel this way today.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Relations with friends or members of groups might be a bit strained or detached and cool today. Don't take this personally. It's not you. It's the spores in the air

Gemini May 22 - June 21
There's no question that relations with authority figures are strained today. Knowing this, it's not a day to ask for a favour or permission, is it?

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Travel for pleasure seems to be a bit more like work today. Ditto for exploring educational opportunities. Struggle on.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
You might be disappointed in your fair share of something today. "That's it?" Don't worry, because in a day or two, things will swing back in your favor.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Relations with partners and close friends are detached today. One tends to think, "What am I getting out of this relationship compared to what I'm putting into it?"

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Your interactions with co-workers could be better. Others are not inclined to help you or go along with things. You might even feel the same way. Just coast today.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
This is a bummer day for romantic relationships, because people tend to think, "What's in it for me?" This is not a giving day — it's quite the opposite.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Today your ideas about redecorating or making improvements at home might be halted, because the cost of things is just prohibitive. Wait a week to see what you think later.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Relations with daily contacts are strained today. In fact, you feel unloved and unappreciated. Oh well. This too, shall pass. (You are loved.)

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Something to do with your finances (business or personal) disappoints you today. Well, you are not alone. Many people feel a financial squeeze play right now.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Today you are more concerned with practical realism as opposed to touchyfeely matters. Frankly, you simply have to work with what you've got. Today, you're on your own.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

	1		4		2			
				9		5		6
	2		8					
9						7		5
	5						3	
8		3						4
					3		9	
1		4		6				
			7		8		1	

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

Your daily crossword and Sudoku answers from the play page.

for more fun and games go to metronews.ca/games

2	7	8	5	6	9	1	3	4
3	1	6	4	7	8	5	2	9
9	4	5	1	3	2	7	6	8
7	5	2	6	4	3	8	9	1
8	6	3	9	5	1	2	4	7
4	9	1	2	8	7	6	5	3
1	3	9	7	2	5	4	8	6
5	8	4	3	1	6	9	7	2
6	2	7	8	9	4	3	1	5

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